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RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/IHB, OES/SAT, OES/PCI AND OES/EGC
STATE FOR EAP/K, ISN/NESS AND STAS
STATE PASS TO EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
WHITE HOUSE FOR OSTP AND CEQ
DOE FOR INTERNATIONAL, NE, FE, AND EERE
USDOC FOR 4400/MAC/EAP/OPB/ITA/TA
USDOC FOR NIST
HHS FOR OGHA
HHS PASS TO NIH FOR FIC
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTL PROGRAMS
STATE PASS TO NRC FOR INTL PROGRAMS

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SUBJECT: SEOUL ESTH UPDATE - MAY 2009

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ENVIRONMENT

C40 Large Cities Climate Summit Drafts Seoul Declaration to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1. The third biennial summit of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, held in Seoul from May 18-21, reviewed progress that cities have made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and assessed future challenges. At the summit, mayors and officials from the world's 40 biggest cities plus 17 affiliate municipalities adopted a "Seoul Declaration" whereby they agreed to create "low-carbon cities by

cutting greenhouse gas emissions to the largest extent possible [and] by adapting themselves to unavoidable climate change consequences..." The Annex to the Declaration spells out specific policies and measures cities can take to address climate change, such as using a Measurement Tool developed by the Clinton Climate Initiative to calculate a baseline inventory of emissions.

¶2. Leaders of the world's large cities -- including London, New York, Paris, Tokyo, and Toronto -- as well as former U.S. President Bill Clinton spoke at the forum to emphasize the role that cities can play in the fight against climate change. Former President Clinton emphasized the urgency for both national and municipal governments to act on climate change. He stated that the issue is as much economic as environmental. "Inaction," he said, will eventually cause "enormously expensive measures that can be avoided if we act now."

¶3. The C40 group was established in London in 2005. A second summit was held in New York in 2007. The next C40 summit will be held in 2011 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

First Meeting of East Asia Climate Partnership Focuses on Pilot Projects to Transfer Technology

¶4. On May 29 in Seoul, the Korean government held the first meeting of the East Asia Climate Partnership it has established to discuss and develop models of "low-carbon and green growth." President Lee Myung-bak first announced the Partnership in July 2008 to assist developing countries in Asia in their efforts to mitigate global warming through the transfer of new technologies. Korea has

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committed to providing USD 200 million in Overseas Direct Assistance through the Partnership to be used to implement pilot projects for climate change mitigation and adaptation and to finance purchase of successful technologies.

¶5. The meeting was attended by some 60 high level officials from Korea, China, Mongolia, the ASEAN countries, the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, as well as the Asian Development Bank and the UN Environmental Program. Officials at the meeting adopted the "Seoul Initiative for Low Carbon Green Growth in East Asia" and discussed the initial 17 projects, several of which will be implemented in Vietnam, Mongolia, and Nepal. The projects range from the fabrication of solar voltaic grids to the development and construction of "smart buildings" that can monitor their own energy usage and automatically turn lighting and appliances on and off.

¶6. The meeting of the East Asia Climate Partnership preceded and was held in conjunction with the Korea-ASEAN Summit held from June 1-2 on Jeju Island. At the end of the Summit, the leaders of Korea and the ten ASEAN nations said in a joint statement that they agreed to cooperate in improving energy efficiency and in diversifying energy sources into nuclear power, hydropower, solar, and bio-energy.

South Korea Completes Its First Tidal Power Plant Pilot Project

¶7. The Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MLTM) said on May 15 that the country has completed its first tidal power station, a pilot project using tidal stream technology that draws energy from currents in much the same way as wind turbines do. According to the MLTM press release, the tidal power plant was completed in Jindo, South Jeolla Province, using domestically developed technology at a total project cost of 12.5 billion won (USD 10 million). MLTM said that the one megawatt plant should be able to generate electricity for 430 households annually. If successful, its capacity will be expanded to 90 MW by 2013, which would be enough to supply electricity for about 46,000 households.

Seoul City and POSCO Steel Expand Hydrogen Fuel Cell Usage

¶8. The Pohang Steel Company (POSCO) held on May 15 a ceremony to mark the completion of a hydrogen fuel cell power station in Seoul. The 2.4 megawatt plant is capable of generating sufficient

electricity to supply 3200 households and enough hot water to provide heating for 1000 households, the company said. The plant will be operated by the company's energy subsidiary, POSCO Power. POSCO also signed a memorandum of understanding with Seoul city to expand the use of its hydrogen fuel cell generators in Seoul. According to the Seoul city government, hydrogen fuel cells will account for 30 percent of alternative energy sources used in the city by 2020.

Science and Technology

Korea Prepares for First Domestic Space Rocket Launch in Late July

¶9. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said on June 2 that the state-run Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) has been conducting final tests on mock-ups of the Korea Space Launch

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Vehicle-I (KSLV-1) rocket, ahead of the planned late July launch of a rocket carrying a Korean-made satellite into space. The rocket will be assembled at the Naro Space Center in Goheung, South Jeolla Province. The two-stage rocket has been developed jointly by Russia's Khrunichev State Space Science and Production Center and KARI. The liquid-fuel lower part of the rocket, which was developed by the Khrunichev Center, will be delivered to Korea from Russia in June. It will be attached to the solid-fuel upper part, which was developed by the KARI. The rocket will carry a 100-kilogram scientific satellite, developed by the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology and the Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology.

¶10. The KSLV-1 will be the first space rocket to be launched from South Korean soil. The vehicle weighs 140 tons, measures 33.5 meters in length and 2.9 meters in diameter. It will have a thrust of 170 tons. Korea is making plans to launch a 1.5 ton multi-purpose commercial satellite on a fully indigenous rocket, named KSLV-2, possibly in 2018.

Korea's First Polar Icebreaker to Sail for Antarctica in December

¶11. The Korea Polar Research Institute said in a May 19 press statement that it had completed recruiting the key crew members of Korea's first domestically produced icebreaking research vessel. The Araon is a 6.950-ton icebreaker designed for operation in ice up to one meter in thickness at a speed of three knot per hour. She is equipped with twin Azimuth propulsion thruster units and boasts a helicopter, barge, and workboat as part of her heavy equipment. The 25 officers and crew and 60 researchers will have use of the Araon's laboratories and computer suites to conduct surveys, long-term observations, and oceanographic, acoustic, and geophysical research. Production of the Araon will be completed by the end of September; it is scheduled to set sail for Antarctica in December this year. ("Araon" combines the Korean words "ara" (sea) and "on" (all) to signify Korea's ability to cruise all the seas of the world.)

¶12. The Korean government hopes the research vessel will enhance Korea's research capability in the polar region and evaluate the proposed location for the construction of Korea's second research station in the Antarctic. Currently, Korea operates one permanent station in the Antarctic, the King Sejong on King George Island. Korea also maintains research facilities, the Dasan, in Ny-Alesund, Svalbard Islands in the Arctic.

Korea Develops New Oxide Transistors for Organic Light-Emitting Diode (OLED) Displays

¶13. According to local news media reports of May 26, a research team at the state-run Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI) has developed a transparent, oxide transistor that will enhance the operational stability and optical qualities of organic light-emitting diode (OLED) displays. OLEDs are made of a thin film of organic molecules layered onto a polymer surface that emit light of various wavelengths according to the arrangement of the molecules. They are typically used in television screens,

computer monitors, cell phone displays, and digital camera displays.

OLEDs can be printed onto flexible substrates, opening the door to new applications such as roll-up displays and displays embedded in clothing. Theoretically, OLEDs can be used as a light source for general space illumination and may one day replace incandescent lighting.

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¶14. The basic technology for OLEDs was developed by Eastman Kodak Company. Sony produced the first OLED television for commercial sale in 2007. Korea's Samsung SDI currently is the world's largest OLED manufacturer and holds the largest number of OLED-related patents.

Health

H1N1 Flu Tally Grows to 46; Students Returning from U.S. a Cause for Concern

¶15. As of June 7, the Korean Centers for Disease Control (KCDC) has confirmed 6 cases of H1N1 influenza infections in the country. Among them were 18 American citizen English language teacher recruits who have all been treated with Tamiflu and released from the isolation wards of local hospitals. Among the most recent cases have been at least six Korean students returning from studies in the United States. Approximately 120,000 Korean students attend schools in the United States, and many of them will return to Korea in June for summer vacation. The good news is that the disease appears to be much less serious around the world than when it first appeared in Mexico in April.

Korea's Steep Increase in Hepatitis A Infections

¶16. According to recent data released by the KCDC, Hepatitis A infection in Korea has surged in recent years and especially in the first five months of 2009. Following the rapid economic development of the 1980s and 1990s, incidence of the disease was practically negligible - only 105 cases in the entire country in 2001. But in 2002 that number tripled to 317. That number more than doubled to 798 reported cases by 2005. In 2006, the number of cases jumped to ¶2081. In 2008, the incidence of Hepatitis A infections skyrocketed to 7895 cases and to 4231 reported cases in the first five months of ¶2009.

¶17. The disease is transmitted by the fecal-oral route. Ironically, the KCDC cited improved sanitary conditions as a possible explanation for the increase. It said that when Korea was less developed, people were exposed to the disease in their infancy or childhood (when symptoms are less severe) and gained lifelong immunity from the exposure. With improved sanitation and hygiene, however, an increasing number of people have their first contact with the virus as adults. About 80 percent of infections in recent years have been reported by people in their 20s and 30s, a statistic which supports this theory. Other experts quoted in the media speculate that growing numbers of affluent young adult Korean tourists are carrying the virus back from developing countries in Asia and Africa where sanitary conditions are poorer and the disease is more prevalent.

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